

J. C. COOK.

FOR THE BLOOMFIELD GAZETTE.
BLOOMFIELD.

A POEM, BY A NATIVE.

"By fancy led, a space of years
Backward I drift to-night,
Down life's shadow-mottled tide,
Of which Time's ta'en his flight.I look on the old landmark's here,
And think what change has grown
In Bloomfield since I was a child,
With all have Hope unknown!Those were the days when golden days
Tinted the earth and sky,
As in love's wings like butterfly's
O'er each joy we did fly."Ah well, a day, that date has fled,"
Love's pinions move less light;
With many a leaf without, Hope
Lie in the lap of Night.But still its rival charms bloom forth
As in those days of yore,
Many and varied, marking well
The place fond heart's abode.Homes wherein quiet peace holds sway,
And gentle feelings reign,
Where comfort pads the seat of Toil,
In Bloomfield yet remain.The shady trees inviting to
A cool or sheltered strok,
Still spread their boughs unbrazeous o'er
Each path or swelling knoll.But those who in our palmy days
Were won these houses to brighten,
Have sped for home and in yon bower
Have left their bones to whiten:"Within that hollow, 'neath the slope,
In yonder corner they
Repose—their spirits gone to God,
Their bodies turned to clay.Meanwhile from village into town
Our native place has grown—
Strangers (who then were strange to us)
Commenging with our own.Trade rises in our rustic lanes
And Wealth flows in a—pace,
Leading more value to our "lots"
With each Census' increase.How changed, within this little span
Of time which we've enjoyed,
Is everything in Bloomfield, which
From first our thoughts employed;Except along the village church
Which the "good Deacon" raised,
Where erst—in that time by-gone we
Have listened, prayed and praised.And the old school, where clustered thoughts
Of boyish days hang over,
Has disappeared from all but minds
From which naught can be never.Its long, low eves are pendant with
Our triumphs and forbodings,
Its floor with nut-shells strown hold, too,
Remembrances of "ruggings.""How changed! Instead that spacious house
Where youth is now "immered"
With no old-fashioned "conings" which
Our youthful flesh endures."Even the very birds are changed;
Living amidst us now—
Are sparrows from across the seas—
Twittering on every bough.

Monclair, Sept. 27, 1872. A. F. L.

Cricket on the Hearth.

More: We opened this Department to encourage our young people to exercise their imagination and their pens pretty much in their own way. We believed that to see their thoughts print would be a means of development and training of much value to them in acquiring their education. As we have nothing from them this week, we place under this head the following communications, intended for the young, written for the GAZETTE by two of our esteemed correspondents.—Eds.

MESSRS. EDITORS: I send you an article for the GAZETTE, for your use, if you think it may be useful. It is the account of an incident which happened to me a few months ago, and which has just been brought back to me by some peculiar circumstances. I thought it might do the boys good. R.

"WELL! I CAN'T HELP IT!"

That was the reply of a bright, honest-faced boy of about thirteen to a gentleman who had overtaken him, and was walking up the hill by his side—some trifling incident having led them into conversation. The boy was smoking a dirty pipe.

The gentleman asked, "Are you older than I am?"

The only answer was a puzzled look; and well that might be, as the gentleman was old enough to be the boy's grandfather. A repetition of the question brought the answer:

"No, sir."

"But you appear to have got farther on in life than I have."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Why, I have not yet reached the right age to begin to smoke."

"Well, I can't help it: I can't stop. I have tried and tried, and declared that I would not smoke. But I can't help it."

"I am sorry to hear you say that. Only think what it is that you have said—that you can't help doing what you think you ought not to do."

"Well, when I am with the boys and see them smoking, I want to smoke so bad that I can't help it. I have given up trying not to."

"Then, you have no longer control of yourself. What are you going to do?"

"Well, that I won't be. I won't drink."

"That is good, and I hope you will

stick to it. But I am afraid for you. How can you be sure that there is anything you won't do? You may want to, and then you can't help it."

"No! I won't drink. I used to, and I have given it up. I won't drink."

"Well, you may see something which does not belong to you, and 'want it so bad' that you 'cannot help' taking it, and then you will be a thief. Don't you see you are not your own master? You cannot keep from doing whatever you want to, whether it is right or wrong. You do not know what you may do."

At this point the ashes were quietly shaken out, and the pipe found its way stealthily into the boy's pocket.

"What do you suppose makes a blacksmith's arm so strong?"

"Because he is working with it all the time."

"Exactly. And if steady work makes the muscles strong, will want of work make them weak?"

"I suppose so."

"Think of this now. There is something else about a man to get strong, or get weak, besides his body. He may have a strong character or a weak one. A strong character can say 'No' to temptation, and will not do what is wrong, if the desire be ever so great. But does the blacksmith's arm grow strong all at once?"

"No, sir; it grows strong little by little, as he works."

"And will it get weak little by little, if he does not work?"

"Yes, sir."

"And it is just so with a man's character. The stronger he resists a temptation, the easier he can do it, because his character grows stronger by exercise. His resolves begin to mean something. When he resolves not to smoke, or not to drink, he can say 'No,' instead of giving up to the temptation, and saying, 'I can't help it.' And, in the same way, every time a weak character gives up to temptation, it becomes weaker, because it did not use the strength it had. So, little by little, a man's character grows strong or grows weak. How do you think it is with you?"

This time it was not a puzzled, but a thoughtful look that gave the silent answer.

"Suppose I break my arm, and it gets well. But unfortunately I break it again in the same place; and, by and by, after it has healed, I break it the third time in the same place, and it heals again. Now, do you suppose that place in the arm will be stronger or weaker for being broken so often?"

"It would be weaker, I should think."

"Certainly. And now, suppose I break my conscience just in one place very often—for instance, my conscience says, 'don't smoke,' and I resolve not to smoke. But every time I see others smoking, I break my resolution, and take a pipe; and this happens often. Are your conscience and your resolution worth any more for breaking so often, or does your conscience get weaker just in that one spot?"

"I suppose it must get weaker."

"I think you have found it so. You have tried to stop smoking and have failed, and failed till you have given up trying. Your character has grown weak, and you feel it, and make no further effort. But you are not weak about tobacco only; your whole character gets weak, and will show weakness wherever it is tried, and it gets weak little by little; and so boys and men give up, first to one vice, and then to another, till they become thoroughly bad."

"You did not learn to smoke in a day. No one gets to be a drunkard in a day. It is little by little; and you have begun to go down, and you cannot tell where you will stop. My lad, this will not do! You must begin to grow strong, instead of going on to grow weaker. Put out all your strength to control yourself, and to do right; every time you succeed and overcome temptation, you will gain strength. Try now hereafter to be a man. But you must have better strength than your own. Christ was tempted when He was on earth, and He conquered with those that are tempted. Won't you pray to Him for help?"

THE LITTLE WILD CATS.

A gentleman in M— was out hunting, and found a nest of baby wild cats. They were pretty innocent looking little things. He brought them home, and being fond of mischief, he thought he would play a joke on his father, who liked pets. They were Maltese kittens. They grew fast, and had very funny tricks, much to the amusement of the old gentleman and all the family.

They were playful, like other kittens, only a great deal more so. They would run away with the old gentleman's gloves, his hat, or his slippers, and there would be a great scampering time before he could get them away from them. They would go up stairs and jump and tumble out of the second story windows, and would hurt themselves so that everybody would think they were dead. In a few hours they would come to life, and be as full of their pranks as ever.

"Well, well," said the old gentleman, "these are wonderful Maltese kittens."

Another day several little chickens were missing. Soon after the kittens are found quarrelling over another. Some weeks passed and they grew older and larger. From the barn yard is heard a great quack! quack! quack! quacking! They all rush out, men, women and children, and what do you think they say? A regular battle between the old drake and the Maltese kittens. They had to take a club to them, and pull the old drake away.

If you want to hear you say that. Only think what it is that you have said—that you can't help doing what you think you ought not to do."

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"Then, you have no longer control of yourself. What are you going to do?"

"Well, that I won't be. I won't drink."

"That is good, and I hope you will

stick to it. But I am afraid for you. How can you be sure that there is anything you won't do? You may want to, and then you can't help it."

A. W. McDOWELL.

SHUBOTA, Miss., Nov. 10, 1872.

Flat Dinner.

"What's a feather, Pope says,
And ladies do not doubt it,
For those who least within the head,
Display the most about it.

Milton being asked if he did not intend to instruct his daughter in different languages, replied, "No, sir; one tongue is enough for a woman."

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"You did not learn to smoke in a day. No one gets to be a drunkard in a day. It is little by little; and you have begun to go down, and you cannot tell where you will stop. My lad, this will not do! You must begin to grow strong, instead of going on to grow weaker. Put out all your strength to control yourself, and to do right; every time you succeed and overcome temptation, you will gain strength. Try now hereafter to be a man. But you must have better strength than your own. Christ was tempted when He was on earth, and He conquered with those that are tempted. Won't you pray to Him for help?"

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